

Remarks:

1. Rejections.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation that the Examiner indicates that claims 50-55 contain allowable subject matter and that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including the limitations of their base claims. Further, claims 13, 14, and 16-20 now stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly rendered obvious by U.S. Patent No. 6,156,064 to Chouinard in view of Thoratec Products Information. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

2. Chouinard in view of Thoratec Products Information.

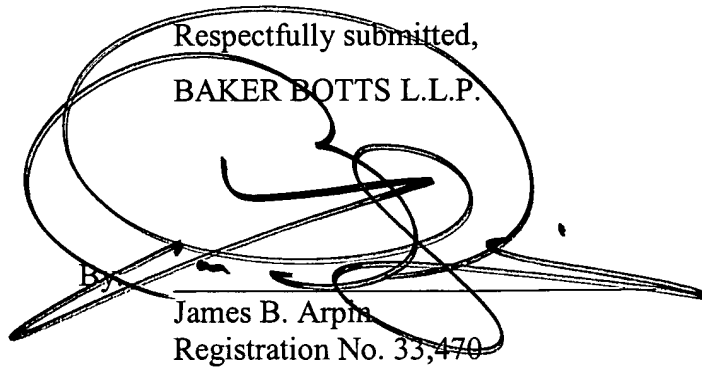
As noted above, claims 13, 14, and 16-20 stand rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Chouinard in view of Thoratec Products Information. Applicants are amending claims 13, 14, and 16 to include the limitations of allowable claims 50, 52, and 54, respectively. Therefore, claims 13, 14, and 16, and the claims dependent therefrom, are allowable. Further, in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, Applicants are rewriting claims 51, 53, and 55, in independent form to include the limitations of their base claims. In view of these amendments, Applicants maintain that the obviousness rejections of claims 13, 14, and 16-20 now are moot, and Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the obviousness rejections.

Conclusion:

Applicants respectfully submit that this application, as amended, is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants' representatives, either in person or by telephone, would expedite

prosecution of this application, we would welcome such an opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,
BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'James B. Arpin', is written over the typed name and registration number. The signature is enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

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